



Restaurant Ambience as a Catalyst for Sustainability in Mangaluru

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Abstract

Going to a restaurant is an experience that engages all of our senses - not just our taste buds! The music played in the restaurant, the color scheme in the restaurant, and the way the chairs are arranged in the restaurant, all of these components of atmosphere play an important role in forming an impression about the place. People have also become more sensitive to their comfort in relation to the environment. As a result, the study's primary goal is to determine if men or women are more influenced by restaurant ambience. The study on Restaurant Ambience as a Catalyst for Sustainability was conducted in Mangaluru, and it is based on primary data obtained through questionnaires from 512 respondents. Statistical tools, Chi-Square tests, graphs, and charts were used to analyze and interpret the data. The research is based on the consumer's perspective. The study discovered that the atmosphere of a restaurant has an equal impact on men and women. Customers dine out for the experience as much as the quality of the cuisine that is served, therefore the atmosphere is critical to keeping them coming back. As a result, restaurant ambience can be a powerful weapon for staying profitable in the market.

Keywords: Restaurant Ambience; Sustainable Business Practices; Sustainable Dining; Restaurant Selection attributes

1. Introduction

Going out to eat is about more than just the food, it's about the experience. The profitability of a restaurant is influenced by a number of things. These factors include demand for local cuisine, food and other variable expenses, marketing activities, management, and much more. While these are all apparent aspects, the atmosphere of the restaurant is sometimes underestimated in terms of its relevance as a contributor to long-term profitability. It's vital to remember that before guests smell or taste the food, they assess the establishment based on the design and colours that surround them, as well as how they make them feel. Diners, after all, take in the atmosphere of a restaurant long before they take their first mouthful. When we walk into a restaurant, the first thing we do is assess the aesthetics. As a result, it is vital that the restaurant provide a positive first impression. Having a pleasant atmosphere will attract customers to come in, stay longer, eat and drink more, and eventually boost the restaurant's profitability. Customers will feel at ease and enjoy their dining experience if the

restaurant creates the appropriate ambience. Customers that are satisfied with their service are more likely to return, resulting in increased profits. A positive dining experience also promotes word-of-mouth advertising for the business. Word of mouth has proven to be one of the most effective and reliable means of advertising that a restaurant can employ. Though difficult to quantify, word-of-mouth referrals have undeniably favourable long-term effects on a restaurant's profitability. If the correct kind of atmosphere isn't given, customer loyalty and word-of-mouth marketing will suffer, and there's a potential that customers will leave a negative review. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of ambience-focused restaurants. Restaurants are spending a lot of money on their interiors, which were ignored in previous decades. After the Corona Pandemic, people have become more sensible about the places they visit for food. Growth in the online delivery sector has posed another significant challenge to the restaurants. People have also become

more sensitive of their comfort in relation to the environment. As a result, the study's primary goal is to determine if men or women are more influenced by restaurant ambience. H0: There is no significant relationship between restaurant ambience and gender-based dining habits. H1: There is a significant relationship between restaurant ambience and gender-based dining habits.

1.1. Conceptual Framework

1.1.1. Definition

Webster's defines ambience as, a feeling or mood associated with a particular place, person, or thing. Restaurant ambience involves everything from lighting and sound to decor and colour. But it also involves the mood and, of course, cleanliness.

1.1.2. History of Restaurant

Displaced cooks from aristocratic houses created the path for the sophisticated restaurant dining experiences we enjoy today after the French Revolution at the end of the 18th century. The chefs concentrated on fine dining experiences by cooking private dinners for customers, creating à la carte menus with gourmet food.

1.1.3. The Birth of Fine Dining

The chefs infused their enterprises with aristocratic touches. Guests were not required to eat their meals at a communal table, as was customary in taverns and roadside inns. Instead, customers were seated at private tables reserved by reservations, which was a novel notion. Guests dined on tablecloths with beautiful crockery and cutlery, which are hallmarks of modern fine dining. Menus were framed for presentation, whether they were prix fixe or à la carte. Guests were given a check for the total amount of their bill at the end of the meal.

1.1.4. The Rise of Restaurants in France After the Revolution

These professional chefs-turned-restaurateurs made a lot of money. They catered to a new class of provincial deputies who arrived in Paris after the Revolution ended. More astute restaurateurs altered their establishments to add amenities such as restrooms, which could be used for a fee. There were only about 50 eateries in Paris before the Revolution. A renowned travel book, the *Almanach des Gourmands*, listed 3,000 restaurants in the city by

1814. In the 19th century, thanks to developments in travel, luxury eating locations sprang up all around Europe and beyond. Restaurants evolved into the recognised concepts we see today at the turn of the twentieth century.

1.1.5. The French Create New Restaurant Concepts

Due to developments in travel, the number of restaurants in Paris continued to grow during the nineteenth century. Following Napoleon's fall, wealthy Europeans came to Paris to sample the city's many gourmet eating alternatives. This was especially true with allied officer gentlemen, a pattern that would continue after World War II ended. Cafés, a type of restaurant that does not provide table service, became popular in the nineteenth century. Customers instead place their orders at a counter and serve themselves. Soup kitchens and dairy shops outside of Paris supplied low-cost home-style meals, attracting people of the lower working class.

1.1.6. Gourmet Dining Goes Global

Travel developments fuelled luxury tourism at the end of the 19th century, inspiring travellers to desire to eat while they were away from home. Eating became more of an art than a necessity. Dining in famous Parisian cafés and restaurants, which had established a firm reputation for excellent food and service by that time, was a part of the vacation experience. César Ritz, a Swiss entrepreneur, teamed up with renowned French chef Auguste Escoffier to create the Grand Hotel of Monte Carlo in the 1880s, which was the first to combine luxury rooms with gourmet cuisine under one roof. Other luxury hotels began to spring up all throughout Europe soon after. The French Restaurant became a global phenomenon in the twentieth century. It was a "restaurant" in Spain. It was known as a "ristorante" in Italy. It remained "restaurant" in the United Kingdom and the United States, but it would soon develop to meet the needs of evolving customers. Restaurants in the United States would evolve further by the end of the century, introducing the world to restaurant chains, fast food, and a return to farm-to-table dining.

1.2. Elements of Ambience

Light quality – Natural and artificial light both have a role; humans prefer natural light, but it can be

distracting at certain times of the day and year. Lighting must be consistent with the design, and day-part modifications must be flexible. Harsh glare is unappealing, but flat light can be tedious. The quality of exposed kitchen lighting must match that of the front-of-house lighting. Noise level – These changes greatly depending on the desired outcome; thus, the concept is crucial. The ability of a space to absorb or reflect sound is influenced by its material, texture, and spatial shape. This is not a one-size-fits-all situation because sound system requirements rely on a thorough grasp of the acoustic aspects. Space and scale – Scale is determined by how we see the concept's social quotient: Do we want people to interact and crush together, or do we want to give people more personal space? Should the area be open and inspiring, or should it provide comfort and enclosure? When creating an effective atmosphere, all essential spatial and scale aspects should be considered. Touch – While the visual appeal of materials is important, it is frequently the tactile experience that people remember; natural wood textures, soft leather, and cloth evoke comfort, while shiny metal, stone, and glass excite a place. Some materials, such as granite, offer the best of both worlds: a rich depth of visual complexity combined with a smooth hard tactile reality. Smell – We'll defer to the chef on taste, but scents, both good and terrible, reach the client long before the food. While this is not always an aspect that can be controlled through design, it is a significant element in both first and enduring impressions. Apart from the aromas in the kitchen (which can be beneficial if controlled), the materials used play a role – both in terms of their intrinsic nature and their ability to retain or repel operating odours (such as cleaning chemicals) that are rarely acceptable. (Wardono, Hibino, & Koyama, 2017) in their article titled “Effects of restaurant interior elements on social dining behaviour” found that Customers nowadays like to eat in settings where they can satisfy their desires through social interaction. The impact of colours, lighting, and décor on consumers' perceived social, emotional, and behavioural intentions during social dining situations is investigated in this study. The experimental technique is employed, with 162 senior students

participating. The findings reveal that a restaurant with a monochromatic colour scheme, dim lighting, and plain décors produces a statistically significant difference in the full dependent variables when compared to practically any other interior circumstances found during romantic eating, as opposed to casual dining. To supplement prior findings, more research on subtler and diverse features of interior elements is recommended. (Liu & Tse, 2018) The goal of this research is to use the importance-performance analysis methodology to determine the importance and performance of consumers' full-service restaurant selection variables in the United States. Customers valued "accurate guest check," "quick service," "overall value of the dining experience," and "lighting," however the restaurants' performance in these areas was lacking. Customer satisfaction is positively and directly associated to three attribute categories (food, service, and pricing and value), and their effects are somewhat mediated. In this study, however, atmosphere and enjoyment are adversely and partially mediated. (Harrington, Ottenbacher, & Kendall, 2011) in their study on “Fine-Dining Restaurant Selection: Direct and Moderating Effects of Customer Attributes” examined that in fine-dining restaurant choice decisions, researchers looked at the association between six restaurant attribute elements and three consumer characteristics/behaviours. Promotion, price/value, quality expectation, setting, dietary, and variety/innovative qualities are the six elements. The findings back up the idea that in service encounter research, researchers should examine and control for crucial consumer characteristics. Age, gender, and the frequency with which people eat showed to be significant factors in this study. It's worth noting that while communications must define the features (benefits) that matter to diners, it's the categorization factors that help businesses better identify and contact these customers. Hu, H. H., Parsa, H. G., & Self, J. (2010) This study explores the factors influencing consumer behaviour towards green restaurants, emphasizing the role of environmental consciousness in driving patronage. The authors find that customers are more likely to frequent restaurants that implement sustainable practices and demonstrate

a commitment to environmental responsibility. The research highlights the importance of green marketing strategies in enhancing customer loyalty in the hospitality industry. Kang, M., & Guerin, D. A. (2009) Kang and Guerin examine the adoption of environmentally sustainable practices in interior design, focusing on the hospitality industry. The study reveals that while there is growing awareness and implementation of sustainable design, challenges such as cost, lack of knowledge, and client demand persist. The authors argue that greater emphasis on education and industry standards is necessary to overcome these barriers and promote widespread adoption of green interior design practices.

1.3. Objectives

The study is intended to achieve the following objectives:

1. To know the influence of restaurant ambience on gender-based dining habits.
2. To determine which aspects of a restaurant's ambience, attract customers.
3. To identify the occasions on which customers pay greater attention to the restaurant's ambience.

2. Methodology

The study is based on primary data. The researcher has prepared questionnaire and distributed and have collected back 512 responses. The respondents include only residents of Mangaluru City. Statistical tool, Chi square test, is used to test the hypothesis. Also, charts and graphs are used to analyse and interpret the data collected. Available secondary data was extensively used for the study. Here the sample size consists of 512 respondents of Mangaluru City. Sample size considered is greater than 384 which was computed using following formula assuming population proportion as 0.5 for 7,36,000 population of Mangaluru City based on recent survey, at 95% confidence level. The researcher chose Mangaluru as the location for the study on Restaurant Ambience as a Catalyst for Sustainability for Sustainability. People from strata are among the respondents. The research is focused on the viewpoint of the customer. The research is solely based on restaurant ambience. The collecting of primary data was hampered by a lack of time.

Table 1 Gender-Based Preferences on Restaurant Ambience

GENDER	PREFERENCES		TOTAL
	YES	NO	
Male	176	64	240
Female	208	64	272
TOTAL	384	128	512

As shown in Table 1, Out of total 512 respondents, 240 are male and 272 are female. It is observed that out of 240 males 176, and out 272 females 208, prefer to visit restaurants based on the ambience.

Hypothesis

H0: There is no significant relationship between restaurant ambience and gender-based dining habits.

H1: There is a significant relationship between restaurant ambience and gender-based dining habits.

Table 2 Hypothesis Testing using Chi-square Test

GENDER	PREFERENCES		
	Yes	No	Total
Male	176 (180)	64 (60)	240
Female	208 (204)	64 (68)	272
TOTAL	384	128	512 (Grand Total)

As shown in Table 2, There is no significant relationship between restaurant ambience and gender-based dining habits. χ^2 (1 degree of freedom, $N = 512$) = 0.6693, $p = .413302$. Not significant at $p > .05$. Hence null hypothesis (H0) is accepted. Figure Respondents learn about the restaurant's ambience from a variety of sources before visiting, as illustrated in the Figure 1. Figure Respondents are drawn to restaurants by a variety of factors, as seen in Figure 2: Interpretation: All 384 respondents who prefer restaurant ambience are drawn to cleanliness and seating arrangements, 352 to lightings, 304 to interior paintings, 288 to privacy arrangements, 256 to air conditioning, 160 to greenery such as gardens, 112 to interior properties, and 96 to photobooths.

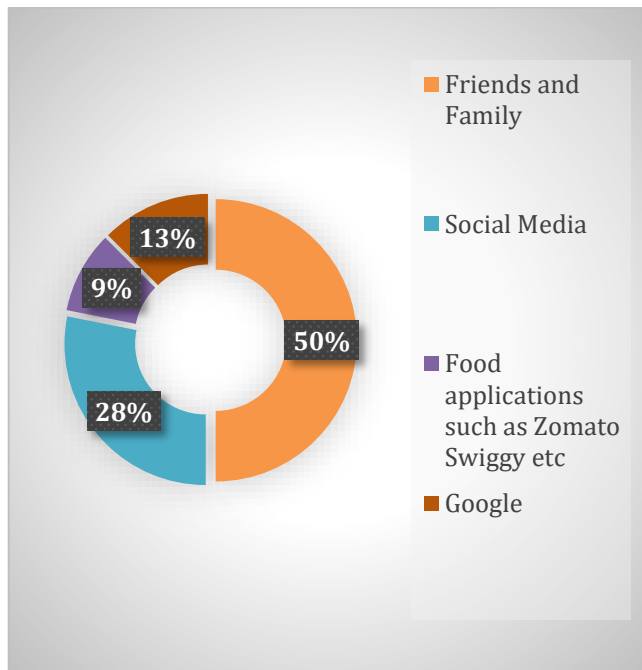


Figure 1 Respondents Learn About the Restaurant's Ambience from a Variety of Sources before Visiting

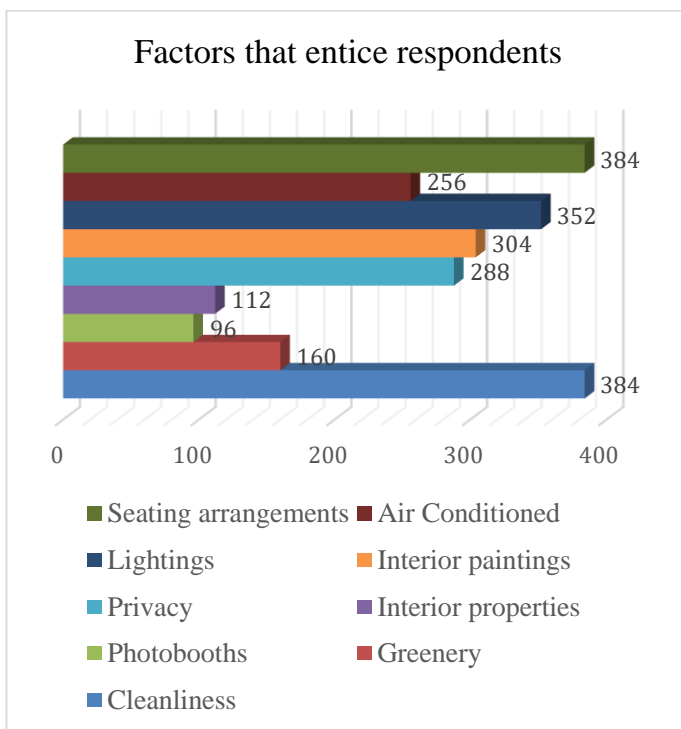


Figure 2 Respondents are drawn to Restaurants by a Variety of Factors

Figure On some important events, respondents place a greater emphasis on restaurant ambience, as seen in the Figure 3: Interpretation: 320 of the 384 respondents who favour restaurant ambience do so when dining with family, 272 when going out with friends, 208 for parties, 176 for couple outings, and 64 for corporate meetings.

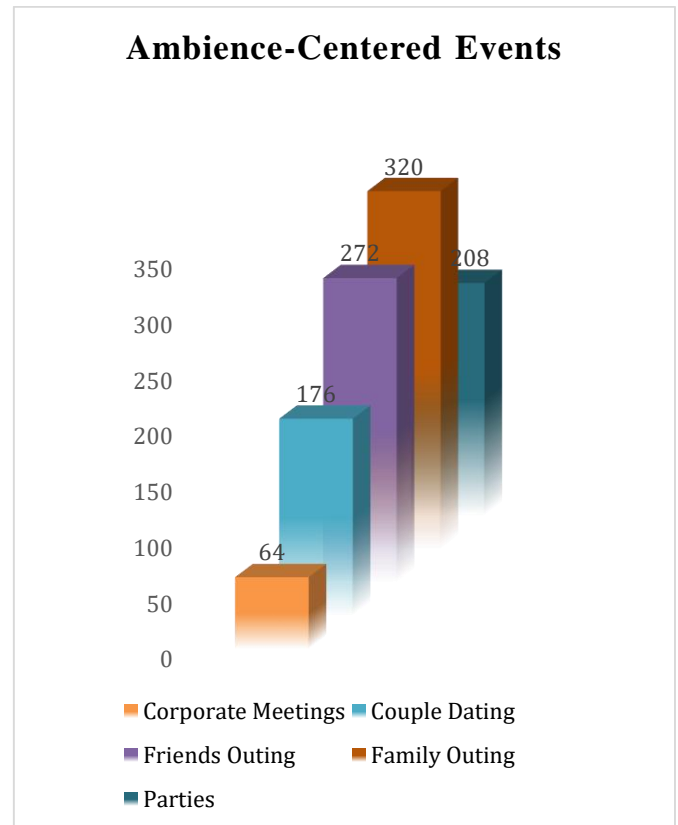


Figure 3 On Some Important Events, Respondents Place a Greater Emphasis on Restaurant Ambience

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

1. The null hypothesis is accepted, according to the Chi-Square test results. χ^2 (1 degree of freedom, $N = 512$) = 0.6693, $p = .413302$ Not significant at $p > .05$, which means There is no significant relationship between restaurant ambience and gender-based dining habits. Hence, it can be said that restaurant ambience influences both men and women to the same extent.
2. The majority of respondents (50 percent)

learn about different restaurant atmospheres from friends and family, while others learn about them from social media (28 percent), Google (13 percent), and food apps (9 percent).

3. Out of the respondents who go to restaurant based on ambience, all of them (384) get attracted by cleanliness maintained in the restaurants and seating arrangements and other factors that attract the respondents are lightings and background music (352), interior paintings (304), privacy arrangements (288), air conditioned atmosphere (256), greenery such as plantations, gardens (160), interior properties such as furniture, antiques, frames, fancy decorative (112) and photobooths, the area where pictures can be clicked (96).
4. The majority of respondents (320) who go to restaurants for the ambience focus on restaurant ambience when dining with family, while others focus on restaurant ambience when dining with friends (272), parties (208), couple outings (176), & corporate meetings (64).

3.2. Discussion

1. When creating a restaurant atmosphere, sanitation and hygiene should be prioritised.
2. The background music should be calm and soothing so that the diners are not disturbed.
3. Restaurants can solicit opinions and suggestions to improve the ambience.

Conclusion

Customers go to a restaurant for a meal because they want to have a complete experience, not simply eat there. They want to be treated well and made to feel unique, and the atmosphere created by a restaurant contributes to these feelings. As a result, the correct atmosphere encourages consumers to anticipate having a good time and will likely lead them to remain longer than they anticipated just because they want to savour the vibe and ambience of the establishment. Customers will feel more at ease and relaxed while dining if the restaurant's atmosphere is as good as the food it serves. Customers will undoubtedly enjoy themselves when quality food is

served in an appropriate setting. Customers dine out for the experience as much as the quality of the cuisine that is served, therefore the atmosphere is critical to keeping them coming back. As a result, restaurant ambience can be a powerful weapon for staying profitable in the market.

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